

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6549

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARCAS 11054

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: SNAR VE

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE ON NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 233134

1. EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN AIMED IN THIS COUNTRY AT KEY PERSONS IN THE ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH COMMUNITES. SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEA'S DISTRICT OFFICE HERE THREE YEARS AGO, AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN FORMED WITH THE VENEZUELAN POLICE (PTJ) RESULTING IN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT NARCOTICS SEIZURES AND ARRESTS. OUR AID NARCOTICS ADVISER MAKES SUGGESTIONS AND PARTICIPATES IN NARCOTICS TRAINING PROGRAMS WITH THE PTJ AND OTHER ENFORCEMENT BODIES. VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE EMBASSY ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE VENEZUELAN COMMISSION AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AS A MEANS OF SHOWING US INTEREST IN VENEZUELA'S OWN DRUG PROBLEM. THE RELOCATION OF THE DEA REGIONAL OFFICE IN CARACAS WAS WELCOMED BY THE EMBASSY AND ENHANCES OUR OVERALL NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES WITH THE GOV.

2. OUR NARCOTICS ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS WILL CONCENTRATE ON PROVIDING ADVISORY ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AS THEY APPLY TO THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM.

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EARLIER THIS YEAR THE PTJ SOLICITED AND RECEIVED RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM A DEA TEAM CONCERNING THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PTJ FOR IMPROVED NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT THE JUST-COMPLETED TWO-WEEK DEA-SPONSORED TOUR OF THE US FOR PTJ DEPUTY DIRECTOR MOLINA IS ALREADY PAYING DIVIDENDS.

3. WE ARE PLEASED AT THE COMMITMENT OF HIGH POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS OF THE GOV TO NARCOTICS CONTROL AND THAT THERE IS A GROWING LOCAL APPRECIATION THAT VENEZUELA IS FACED WITH A DRUG PROBLEM OF ITS OWN. PTJ DIRECTOR ECHEVERRIA LARGELY BASED HIS NOVE 5 REQUEST TO CONGRESS FOR AN INCREASED BUDGET ON THE NEED TO COMBAT VENEZUELA'S GROWING DRUG PROBLEM. HE INDICATED THAT 1 PER CENT OF THE NATION'S YOUTH HAS SOME KIND OF DRUG PROBLEM. ECHEVERRIA SAID DRUG ABUSE HERE HAS BECOME "GRAVE" AND NOW EFFECTS ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. MOREOVER, MINISTER OF JUSTICE MARIN HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS ON NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND CONSUMPTION.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THIS HEMISPHERE CAN BE IMPROVED THROUGH GREATER COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION AMONG THE COUNTRIES THEMSELVES. THIS EMBASSY INTENDS TO SUGGEST TO PTJ DIRECTOR ECHEVERRIA THAT THE GOV NEXT YEAR SPONSOR TWO MEETINGS IN CARACAS OF ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS. ONE WOULD BE FOR VENEZUELAN AND COLOMBIAN POLICE DIRECTORS AND CHIEFS OF NARCOTICS UNITS. THE OTHER WOULD BE FOR POLICE DIRECTORS FROM ALL OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND WOULD BE SIMILAR TO A PREVIOUS MEETING IN BUENOS AIRES IN 1972. IF WE RECEIVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE GOV, WE MAY ASK THE DEPT'S ASSISTANCE IN FUNDING SOME OF THE TRAVEL COSTS TO THESE MEETINGS.
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